



MEMO

To: Coastal Conservancy

From: Nadine Hitchcock, Deputy Executive Officer
Abe Doherty

CC: Legislative Representatives

Date: June 4, 2009

Re: Update on Conservancy Activities Related to Climate Change

Since December 2007, we have been reporting to you about the specific actions we are undertaking to reduce the Conservancy's carbon emissions, and to identify and address climate change impacts as called for in the Conservancy's *Strategic Plan 2007*.

- In April 2008, we described five potential short-term actions related to climate change that could be undertaken to prepare Conservancy staff, and to assist project participants in preparing to address the predicted impacts of climate change.
- In November 2008, we provided a progress report associated with these activities, and we presented and discussed staff's proposed draft climate change project selection criteria and the associated "guidance" document that is intended to inform prospective grantees of ways in which their projects should address climate change impacts from their inception, in project design and through implementation. The guidance identifies references and best management practices to assist applicants in addressing various aspects of climate change impacts.
- In December 2008, our Executive Officer provided a verbal update on additional climate change activities, including a summary of the science speakers that had presented at the Conservancy's office, and of the meetings held with Wildlife Conservation Board, California Department of Fish and Game, and with organizations located in all regions of the coast to discuss the draft climate change project selection criteria.

The states freeze on invoice payments and new expenditures in late December 2008 resulted in a significant slowdown on progress pertaining to most of these climate

Exhibit 3: Memo: Climate Change Activities Update

change activities. Significantly, we have not been able to contract for technical services to assist staff in preparing recommendations and references for incorporation into the guidance document.

Climate Change Actions (Since last reported on December 3, 2008)

Climate Change Science

1. Speaker forum. To educate Conservancy staff and project partners, Conservancy staff organized presentations by four additional climate change scientists. Over 150 members of other agencies, non-governmental organizations and other interested parties have been invited to attend these presentations. The recent presentations included 1) John Weins, the chief conservation scientist from PRBO Conservation Science who discussed how PRBO is predicting distributional shifts in species as a result of climate change; Dan Porter, the director of science and planning for Save the Redwoods League who discussed the use of LiDAR in developing conservation strategies in the face of rapid climate change; Peter Miller, a senior scientist with the Natural Resources Defense Council who discussed salmon restoration and conservation in an era of climate change; and Doug Johnson, the executive director of the CA Invasive Species Council who discussed managing invasive species under a changing climate.
2. Request for science support. Plans to finalize and send out a request for services of one or more scientists with expertise in climate change had to be postponed as a result of the funding freeze. Postponement of this task has significant implications for developing the guidance associated with the project selection criteria, and for identifying references for staff and prospective grantees about climate change best management practices for emissions reduction and adaptation. Staff is now planning to perform some of these tasks directly, pending availability and to utilize existing contracts and volunteer assistance to achieve some of these tasks.
3. Increase private and public funding for research that can address priority needs related to climate change. Staff worked with the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation to develop a project to assess the carbon sequestration rates of tidal wetlands in San Francisco Bay. After the bond freeze, the Moore Foundation generously agreed to fully fund this \$300,000 project. Staff has also been working with many other organizations and agencies to develop plans for filling other data gaps related to carbon sequestration of wetland habitats. On April 2-3, 2009, two Conservancy staff members participated in the California Climate Action Registry conference on “Navigating the American Carbon World” to learn about the developing carbon offset market, which has promising potential to support habitat restoration and enhancement projects.

Exhibit 3: Memo: Climate Change Activities Update

4. Coordination with other state and federal agencies. Staff continues to meet with staff of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the Wildlife Conservation Board, Department of Fish and Game, Department of Parks and Recreation, Air Resources Board and other agencies to exchange information, learn from one another, and to provide mutual support where there are overlapping interests. Staff participates in the Natural Resources Agency's climate change coordination meetings. Staff is also coordinating with staff from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Coastal Services Center and the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary on climate change research and development of web-based climate change adaptation reports and resources.

Other Recent Climate Change Actions and Activities

1. Ocean and Coastal Resources Sector of the California Adaptation Plan. Ocean Protection Council staff (within the Conservancy) are working with Natural Resources Agency staff in leading a working group of representatives from state agencies, the California Ocean Science Trust, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and scientists to develop the Ocean and Coastal Resources Chapter of the California Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. Staff anticipates that a draft of the Adaptation Plan will be released for public review in June 2009.
2. National Academy of Science Sea Level Rise Assessment: Staff of the Ocean Protection Council have been coordinating with other state agencies and with Oregon and Washington to convene and fund an assessment by the National Academy of Science on sea level rise. This assessment helps to implement the Governor's Executive Order S-13-08, which called for such an assessment to be completed by December 1, 2010 and to specifically address:
 - (a) relative sea level rise projections specific to California, taking into account issues such as coastal erosion rates, tidal impacts, El Niño and La Niña events, storm surge and land subsidence rates;
 - (b) the range of uncertainty in selected sea level rise projections;
 - (c) a synthesis of existing information on projected sea level rise impacts to state infrastructure (such as roads, public facilities and beaches), natural areas, and coastal and marine ecosystems; and
 - (d) a discussion of future research needs regarding sea level rise for California.

Staff of the Ocean Protection Council convened a public meeting on March 23, 2009, to seek comments on the scope for this sea level rise assessment. The report that will be produced by the National Academy of Science panel will be invaluable for the Conservancy and its partners, to help with assessing vulnerability to sea level rise.

3. Other Coordination and Education Activities. On April 17, 2009, staff from the Conservancy participated in the Stanford Law, Science and Policy Symposium on

Exhibit 3: Memo: Climate Change Activities Update

Climate Change and Marine Resiliency. This stimulating symposium addressed strategies for protecting marine species and fisheries and addressed issues related to marine renewable energy. The Conservancy staff met with Dutch engineers and planners who have funding from the Dutch government to demonstrate how Dutch planning and engineering practices may assist in the development of adaptation strategies for San Francisco Bay. Conservancy staff are coordinating with other agencies and research institutions on the development of a Bay Area Ecosystem Climate Change Consortium, to address the need for research and planning on climate change impacts to ecosystems.

Revising the Draft Climate Change Project Selection Criteria

In November 2008, staff presented the Board with two new draft climate change project selection criteria, addressing greenhouse gas emissions and vulnerability of the project's objectives, design, and siting to climate change impacts. We also discussed (see November 6, 2008 memo) what the criteria are intended to accomplish, and what we anticipated the proposed guidance document would contain to assist prospective grantees and staff in interpreting the criterion and in addressing climate change concerns pertaining to their projects.

Following the Board meeting, staff conducted discussions with interested parties about the general intent of the criteria and specific wording. As a result of this input and the Governor's Executive Order S-13-08 regarding sea level rise staff revised the criteria and prepared a memo to recommend that the Conservancy adopt the revised criteria. Please refer to the June 4, 2009 memo for the draft revised criteria and a discussion of them. Staff has also drafted application questions for potential grantees to provide information to evaluate consistency of proposed projects with the project selection criteria.